National Funds for Hilly Areas

156. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to create a National fund for fast development of backward hilly areas of border States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the steps to be taken by Government to bring the development in the said States up to the national levels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Most of the border States having hilly areas are Special Category States and receive Central Assistance for their Annual Plans in the shape of 90% grant and 10% loan as against 30% grant and 70% loan for other States. Under Hill Area Development Programme, Special Central Assistance is provided to hill areas of Darjiling and two districts of Assam. In addition, they enjoy all other special concessions meant for Special Category States. There is also a separate Border Area Development Programme for development of border blocks under which Special Central Assistance is provided in the shape of 100% grant.

Backward Districts of Orissa

157. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been made to the Prime Minister for creation of a separate Development Council for the most backward district Kandhmal in Orissa;

(b) if so, the present status of the case;

(c) the time-frame within which it would be set up and details of action plan for its speedy development;

(d) whether Government also propose to identify similarly placed other districts in the State for creation of Development Council; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Factor inhibiting International Investment

158. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission has said that there is a widespread perception that the most important factor blocking international investments is the quality of infrastructure and that Planning Commission would prepare a paper on regulatory standards to evolve globally benchmarked standards and create an investor friendly environment;

(b) if so, whether this paper has been prepared;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the time-frame for preparing this paper?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The note is under preparation. It is likely to be submitted to Committee on Infrastructure within three months.

Food for work and Rojgar Guarantee Scheme

†159. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to link 'food for work' programme with Rojgar Guarantee Scheme and whether requisite legislation is also

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.